

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 038776

EXDIS MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT REYKJAVIK 225 ACTION SECSTATE USNATO
BONN LONDON ANKARA ATHENS BRUSSELS THE HAGUE LISBON
LUXEMBOURG OTTAWA OSLO ROME HELSINKI STOCKHOLM PARIS
COPENHAGEN USUN NEW YORK 18 FEB 76

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 0225

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO SECDEF, CINCLANT AND COMICEDEFOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, IC, UK

SUBJECT: ICELAND-UK FISHERIES DISPUTE: DIPLOMATIC BREAK WITH UK

REF: A. REYKJAVIK 0222 (DTG 171945Z FEB 76)

B. USNATO 0819 (ETG 161745Z FEB 76) (NOTAL)

C. STATE 38096 (DTG 180014Z FEB 76) (NOTAL)

1. I HAD CONVERSATION EARLY THIS MORNING SEPARATELY
WITH PRIMEMIN HALLGRIMSSON AND FONMIN AGUSTSSON ABOUT
TWO HOURS BEFORE ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
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(FRC) MEETS TO PUT ITS STAMP OF APPROVAL ON DIPLOMATIC

BREAK WITH UK. I WENT OVER THE SAME GROUND AS I DID YESTERDAY AND ON FEBRUARY 13, REINFORCED BY CONCERN EXPRESSED IN REFTTEL (C). BOTH REMAINED ADAMANT THAT GOI MUST PROCEED WITH THE BREAK. PRIMEMIN SAID HE WILL MAKE ONE MORE ATTEMPT THROUGH AN IP MEMBER OF FRL TO POSTPONE BREAK FOR AT LEAST A FEW MORE DAYS, BUT DOUBTED HE WOULD SUCCEED. FONMIN WAS IN AN UNCOMPROMISING MOOD ON THIS POINT.

2. WITH RESPECT TO KEEPING OPEN LINE OF COMMUNICATION THROUGH LUNS, FONMIN SAID HE SAW NO MERIT IN ANY OF UK'S POINTS AS CONVEYED THROUGH LUNS. PRIMEMIN ON OTHER HAND, SAID THAT IF BREAK WITH UK DOES INDEED CALM SITUATION HERE IN ICELAND HE WILL TRY TO MAKE OFFER THROUGH LUNS AS REPORTED PARA FOUR REFTTEL (A). HE SAID HE REALIZES IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING A STANDSTILL SITUATION. HE REITERATED, AS HE DID YESTERDAY, THT UK TRAWLERS MUST STOP FISHING IN THE CONSERVATION ZONES, WHERE ICELANDIC TRAWLERS ARE FORBIDDEN TO FISH. IN THIS REGARD, REPORT RECEIVED LAST NIGHT INDICATES UK TRAWLERS HAVE MOVED OUT OF THESE ZONES, BUT A FOURTH FRIGATE HAS JOINED THE UK PROTECTION UNIT, MAKING A TOTAL OF TEN PROTECTION SHIPS FOR THE 34 UK TRAWLERS PRESENTLY FISHING HERE. (NUMBER UK TRAWLERS IS TWICE THE NUMBER UK GENERALLY MAINTAINS HERE AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, A SITUATION WHICH IS CAUSING CLAIM BY ICELANDERS THAT UK NOT REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT VOLUNTARILY LIMITING ITS CATCH.)

3. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, ALL POINTS IN REFTTEL (C) HAVE BEEN REPEATEDLY MADE OVER PAST SEVERAL WEEKS AND PRESSED IN STRONGEST TERMS DURING PAST SEVERAL DAYS. HOWEVER, UK CONTINUED FISHING IN THE CONSERVATION ZONES AND CONTINUED (ALLEGED) RAMMINGS ARE THE LAST STRAWS FOR ICELAND'S PATIENCE. PUBLIC EMOTIONS HERE CANNOT BE OVER-STATED. THEY ARE RUNNING SO HIGH THAT IT WAS INEVITABLE BREAK WOULD TAKE PLACE. IN TODAY'S ATMOSPHERE, BY THIS I MEAN CURRENTLY, LOGIC HASN'T A CHANCE. HOWEVER, ICELANDIC EMOTIONS CAN DROP AS RAPIDLY AS THEY RISE. FOR THIS REASON, IF A CALM
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SITUATION CAN BE MADE TO PREVAIL IN THE DISPUTED WATERS FOR EVEN A PERIOD AS BRIEF AS A COUPLE OF WEEKS, I BELIEVE PRIMEMIN CAN SUCCEED IN GETTING APPROVAL TO MAKE AN OFFER FOR LUNS TO PRESENT TO UK.

4. REGARDING PARA THREE REFTTEL (C), I BELIEVE WE HAVE DISCOURAGED THAT IDEA WITHOUT FEAR OF ITS RESURRECTION.

5. RESULTS OF FRC MEETING WILL BE COMMUNICATED AS
SOON AS KNOWN. AS OF TRANSMISSION THIS TEL MEETING
STILL GOING ON.
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